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Viewing cable 06ANKARA5866, GOT FIRMLY PLACES BLAME ON GREECE FOR MIGRANT

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06ANKARA5866**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06ANKARA5866	2006-10-10 16:20	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Ankara

Appears in these articles:

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VZCZCXRO4690
RR RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 101620Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9301
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005866

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2026
TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: GOT FIRMLY PLACES BLAME ON GREECE FOR MIGRANT
DUMPING; UNHCR MORE CIRCUMSPECT

REF: ATHENS 2620

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Kelly Degnan. Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkish MFA officials continue to place the blame for the deaths of at least six illegal migrants thrown into Turkish territorial waters on September 26 off the coast of Karaburun, Turkey on Greek coast guard officials. The GOT pointed to Greece's lack of cooperation with Turkey on discussing the return of illegal migrants as a continuing problem, though a meeting of the countries' coast guard commanders planned for December holds out some hope. Meanwhile, UNHCR Ankara officials (protect) who interviewed many of the survivors of the September 26 incident said it is clear a crime was committed in the dumping of people overboard, however, it remains unclear exactly who may have perpetrated the crime. END SUMMARY

GOT Places Blame for Deaths on Greek Officials

¶2. (C) Poloff met with Turkish MFA Deputy Directorate General for Expatriate Turks, Migration, Asylum, and Property Issues Department Head Melih Ulueren October 10 to discuss the extensive press reporting and subsequent public statement issued by GOT MFA concerning the September 26 deaths of at least six, and perhaps up to nine, illegal migrants. These deaths were connected to the alleged dumping of a group of up to 42 migrants into Turkish territorial waters by Greek coast guard officials near Karaburun, Turkey. In response to poloff questions regarding the veracity of Turkish press reporting on the incident, Ulueren said it was accurate. In response, Turkish MFA had issued a statement of protest both publicly and through diplomatic channels to Greek authorities on September 27.

¶3. (C) Noting the Greek government's denial of its officials' involvement, Ulueren pointed to the obvious trauma suffered by the survivors and their first-hand accounts of what transpired as proof. Ulueren said the event was just another in a long line of similar instances in which Greek officials have pushed illegal migrants into Turkey, whether they had entered Greece from Turkey or not, though this particular event had had unfortunately dire repercussions. Ulueren indicated Greek officials have consistently abrogated the Greece-Turkey bilateral protocol on re-entry in such instances and refused to respond to Turkish requests to convene a bilateral coordination committee called for under the protocol to discuss these issues.

¶4. (C) Ulueren admitted that a large number of illegal migrants indeed do travel into Greece from Turkey and lamented the difficulty in controlling the flow of such migration throughout the world. However, he claimed that a fair number of such migrants also travel directly from North Africa via boat to Greece, just as they do to Italy and Spain, but GOG authorities attempt to pass them onto Turkey regardless. Ulueren expressed regret that the Greek and Turkish governments have been unable to cooperate more fully on this issue but again pointed to Greek officials for their lack of response to Turkish efforts to consult. He also scoffed at Greek attempts to point a finger at Turkey's

inability to control its borders, saying Greek officials have at times been unable to produce illegal migrants for deportation to Turkey after Turkey has agreed to accept them back upon demonstration of proof that they had traveled to Greece via Turkey.

15. (C) Ulueren said the GOT had pressed for a bilateral meeting of the two countries' coast guard commanders to discuss operational issues related to the return of illegal migrants at sea and it appears this meeting will happen, probably in December.

UNHCR: Crime Committed but Who's to Blame?

16. (C) Poloff met October 10 with UNHCR Ankara XXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXX had just returned from Izmir where XXXXXXXXXXXX had done joint interviews with a Turkish police official of 26 of the surviving mi undeveloped island in the middle of the night at which point

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they began to yell for assistance. The survivors all claimed that four armed men in dark uniforms then arrived, arrested them and handcuffed them with plastic handcuffs. About an hour later, they boarded a boat and shortly thereafter were dumped into the sea, one-half to one kilometer off the Turkish coast. Some of the migrants were unable to swim and drowned. XXXXXXXXXXXX said all of the survivors XXXXXXXXXXXX interviewed were grateful for the treatment afforded them by Turkish officials after their rescue. According to XXXXXXXXXXXX, the GOT indicated most of the migrants had been found to have entered Turkey legally before setting off for Greece.

17. (C) XXXXXXXXXXXX noted that while the stories of all the survivors varied greatly regarding how they came to meet the smugglers, from where the smugglers boat departed, etc., they were all remarkably similar concerning the details of the encounter with Greek officials and being dumped overboard. When XXXXXXXXXXXX asked survivors how they knew the officers they had encountered were Greek, some initially said they had seen the Greek flag. When then asked how they could see, having earlier claimed how dark the survivors said it had been, they indicated they had heard the officers speaking Greek. How these Tunisians, Lebanese, Iraqi, and others knew it was Greek is unclear. XXXXXXXXXXXX both said it is clear a crime was committed, but how conclusively to identify the perpetrators is very difficult.

18. (C) COMMENT: Despite direct questioning of many of the survivors by a neutral third party, it remains impossible to say with any certainty that Greek officials indeed were involved in dumping illegal migrants into the sea to fend for themselves or to drown. It is equally unclear whether this was some sort of elaborate ruse by Turkish officials to enable them to lay blame on Greece. The truth may never be learned, though UNHCR staff in Ankara is considering referring the case to the UN Committee Against Torture or the International Maritime Organization for further investigation. We will continue to monitor such reports as they arise and press the GOT for continued efforts at coordination and cooperation with Greece on this issue.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON